

U.S. Department of Education
2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 12AL3

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Mr. Jerry Snow

Official School Name: Piedmont High School

School Mailing Address: 750 Alabama Highway 200
Piedmont, AL 36272-7240

County: Calhoun State School Code Number*: 185-0020

Telephone: (256) 447-2829 E-mail: jsnow@piedmont.k12.al.us

Fax: (256) 447-8722 Web site/URL: http://phs.piedmont.k12.al.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. Matt Akin Superintendent e-mail: makin@piedmont.k12.al.us

District Name: Piedmont City Schools District Phone: (256) 447-8831

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Jack Spears

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12AL3

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

12AL3

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 (per district designation): 1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
3 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 7285

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	38	38	76
3	0	0	0		10	49	42	91
4	0	0	0		11	48	37	85
5	0	0	0		12	48	35	83
Total in Applying School:								335

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
16 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
83 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 8%
 This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	6
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	21
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	27
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	334
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.08
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	8

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 1%
 Total number of ELL students in the school: 4
 Number of non-English languages represented: 1
 Specify non-English languages:

Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 59%

Total number of students who qualify: 198

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 9%

Total number of students served: 31

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>8</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>30</u>	<u>3</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 17:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	94%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	95%	95%	92%	95%	72%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>66</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>40%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>24%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>6%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>30%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

Piedmont High School, the flagship school of the Piedmont City School District, is located in rural northeast Alabama. Piedmont High School is the only high school in the city of Piedmont. It serves 332 students in grades 09 through 12. PHS is a comprehensive high school - offering Advanced Placement, honors, college preparatory, and career/technical education classes. Although there has been a substantial loss of industry in Piedmont, the size of the student population continues to grow. Strong academics, coupled with exemplary extracurricular programs, entice many students from outside the district to seek enrollment at Piedmont High School.

Individual and team accolades for both scholastic and sporting achievements are very commonplace. Parents, grandparents, and community stakeholders are deeply involved in various aspects of school tradition. A small sampling includes such happenings as traditional, downtown homecoming parades, “White Christmas” food drives, musicals, and student-led community projects.

The mission of Piedmont High School is to provide a quality education that empowers our students to meet the challenges of today’s global society. The allegiance to this statement is evident by the total commitment of the highly qualified staff, as well as the unwavering support of our administration and Board of Education. School pride is fervently ingrained in the residents of our small town. Several faculty members are Piedmont High School graduates; many have children presently attending school within the system. It is easy to understand the deeply personal, vested interest in the continued success of our school system.

One hundred percent of teachers have achieved *Highly Qualified* status and several have obtained National Board Certification. PHS has two feeder schools. The elementary and middle schools provide and prepare each year’s incoming freshman class. This level of familiarity affords the faculty valuable insight regarding the composition of the student body. Learner needs are easily identified, and effective educational plans are created in a timely, proficient manner.

As stated earlier, the massive loss of industry in Piedmont has gravely affected the economics of our surrounding area. Due to this fact, the school system has truly become the focal point/hub of the community. Over the past ten years, PHS has utilized over thirteen million dollars in low interest government bonds for capital improvement. Some recent projects include the construction of an on-campus technical center (2008), a community weather shelter/multi-purpose building (2009), and several athletic facility improvements i.e., new football, baseball, and softball fields (2012).

Most recently, PHS became the first high school in Alabama to implement a one-to-one laptop initiative. This initiative, *MPower Piedmont*, has become a monumental catalyst for improved, innovative instruction at Piedmont High School. *MPower Piedmont* provides a computer for student use twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Laptops were distributed to students in grades four through twelve during the second week of September 2010. Our school system utilizes a learning management system to facilitate delivery of instructional content. The system is web-based; therefore, it allows students and teachers to interact with each other online as needed. Although students still receive face-to-face instruction, many activities and assignments are delivered through the medium of the Internet. For example, students may receive credit for online foreign language courses such as Chinese, French, German, Latin, and Spanish. By integrating this cutting-edge technology, our students are developing the 21st Century skills employers and higher education officials have designated as vital. Furthermore, by expanding our learning environment to the home, the parents are directly involved in the education of their children. This exemplifies genuine collaboration among teachers, parents, and students.

Learners at PHS take full advantage of the opportunities provided. Forty percent of PHS students are on an Advanced Diploma (with Honors) track; they receive credit for Advanced Placement classes in English, U.S. History, and U.S. Government. The challenging curriculum enables PHS students to think globally and become more competitive in the college marketplace. Each year, on average, forty-five percent of PHS seniors are awarded approximately \$1,114,000.00 in scholarships. Sixty-six percent of our graduating seniors attend a post-secondary institution.

The establishment of a strong academic reputation has brought both state and national recognition to Piedmont High School. *U.S. News and World Report* has named PHS as one of “America’s Top High Schools” for the past three years. *U.S. News and World Report* also ranked PHS as the #2 “Most Connected” high school in the country for technology integration. PHS was selected as a 2010 Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) Banner School. Most recently, Apple, Inc. designated PHS as one of fifty-three “Distinguished Schools” for 2012.

1. Assessment Results:

Alabama uses the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE)* and graduation rates to determine *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* under the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* Act. The *AHSGE* assesses students in language, math, reading, science, and social studies. However, only reading and math are used as *AYP* indicators. The *AHSGE* is standardized to an eleventh-grade level. It is administered to all eleventh-grade students for the purpose of determining school progress/accountability.

Alabama designates four levels of achievement on the *AHSGE*. Level I indicates the student does not meet the *Academic Content Standard*. Level II indicates the student partially meets the *Academic Content Standard*. Level III (proficient) indicates the student meets the *Academic Content Standard*. Level IV (advanced) indicates the student exceeds the *Academic Content Standard*. Results reported to the schools are disaggregated into subgroups of ethnicity, special education, limited English proficiency, and free/reduced lunch. Each subgroup must contain at least forty students to receive a score for an accountability goal. If a school does not meet one or more of these goals, the school fails to make *Adequate Yearly Progress*. Piedmont High School conscientiously works to meet and exceed all state assessment standards. Piedmont High School has not failed to achieve *AYP* status for the past four years.

1b. Assessment Results

Students at Piedmont High School have consistently scored above the state average for the past five years. Average scores for twelfth-grade students on the reading and math subtests of the *AHSGE* were noticeably above the state average. Average math scores were 97% percent passing compared to the state average of 95%. Reading scores averaged 98% compared to 94% for the state average. Average scores for eleventh-grade students followed a similar pattern and were consistently above the state average. Reading scores for eleventh-grade students averaged 87% (state - 82%). Math scores averaged 91% (state - 85%).

Particular interest has been given to the percentage of students not only passing, but also scoring in the *advanced* range for both math and reading subtests. The percentage of twelfth-grade students scoring advanced for the reading (21% compared to 18%) and math (25% compared to 18%) subtests was significantly higher than published state averages. The percentage of eleventh-grade students scoring advanced was also well above the state average in reading (21% to 15%) and math (25% to 19%). It is important to note that students who pass (score proficient or advanced) the *AHSGE* are not afforded the opportunity to retake and possibly improve their scores.

An examination of data from the most recent year available (2010 - 11) does not show significant gaps (>10%) in the percentage of students scoring proficient. The difference in twelfth-grade subgroup scores was very small for the two subgroups reported. The difference in the *free/reduced* subgroup was 01% in reading and math. The minority (African-American) subgroup was slightly higher at 07% in both math and reading. Eleventh-grade students showed no difference in math for *free/reduced*; additionally, only a 04% difference was noted with the African-American subgroup. Reading subtests had a slight difference of 02% for free/reduced and 03% for African-American. The percentage of twelfth-grade students scoring advanced revealed a gap of 11% in reading for African-American students and 11% in math for *free/reduced* students. The only significant gap in advanced scores for eleventh-grade students was 10% for African-American students in reading.

Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, two intervention programs were implemented to address students still reading below grade level and/or not scoring proficient on math benchmark tests. Ninth-grade students were identified and enrolled in the applicable intervention program. These intervention

classes were scheduled in lieu of an elective course. Participation in intervention classes is required for students identified as non-proficient in reading or math content areas.

Additionally, during the fall of 2010, a transformational initiative known as *MPower Piedmont* came to fruition as the vision became reality. Although students still receive face-to-face instruction, many activities and assignments are delivered through the medium of the Internet. The initial impact on both reading and math scores is encouraging. The percentage of all eleventh-grade students scoring in the advanced range has increased in math (20%) and reading (06%). Additionally, reading scores for the eleventh-grade *free/reduced* (10%) and African-American (12%) subgroups have showed a dramatic increase. Math scores have also posted an impressive gain of 23% for *free/reduced* students and 19% for African-American students.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The administration and staff of Piedmont High School understand the profound impact of making sound, data-driven decisions. Teachers at PHS continuously analyze results from the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE), ACT, PLAN, PSAT, and Advanced Placement (AP) exams. This information is used to determine/revise school-wide goals and classroom objectives on an annual basis. All PHS teachers have the ability to review course grades through a student management system. Additionally, faculty members have unrestricted access to online assessment data compiled at specific intervals by the Alabama State Department of Education.

Teachers meet monthly in content-area groups to review disaggregated data, to provide insight based on student performance, and to adjust instruction according to student need. The principal and assistant principal are both active participants at these meetings. As a leadership team, teachers and administrators are capable of making immediate, student-centered, instructional decisions. This allows for corrective measures to be implemented in a timely, effective manner.

Benchmark assessments are administered each nine weeks to assist in determining student mastery and provide feedback regarding best teaching practices. These exams have been developed collaboratively by the teachers/administration and are aligned with the applicable Alabama Courses of Study. Multiple versions of these assessments are currently under development.

If an individual teacher observes a student having difficulty with a specific concept, he/she may refer the student to the Response to Instruction (RTI) team. Members of this team will then develop intervention strategies designed to enable the student to experience academic success. The solution may be as simple as providing one-to-one tutoring before or after school. AHSGE data is used to assess areas of both proficiency and need.

Each incoming freshman class is given a practice AHSGE containing all five-subtest areas (language, math, reading, science, and social studies). Results are color-coded and shared with ninth-grade teachers to help determine the level and intensity of remedial instruction needed for students failing to meet proficiency standards. Eleventh-grade students who have not passed all sections of the AHSGE on their first attempt are placed in remediation courses designed to address the area(s) of deficiency. The intervention classes are structured to give students more targeted, individualized instruction. The classes are intentionally small and facilitated by certified faculty members in the subject area.

PHS students take the PLAN in the tenth grade. Results are disseminated to core teachers for use in the preparation of lessons designed to meet learners' needs prior to the administration of the ACT (in the eleventh grade). Research suggests the ACT assessment is a reliable indicator of college readiness and academic success at the post-secondary level. With this fact in mind, ACT score summaries are reviewed and analyzed by all faculty members at the beginning of each year. Instructional decisions are made accordingly. It is noteworthy that our ACT scores have steadily increased for the past five years. Finally, Advanced Placement (AP) teachers receive individual student scores and group reports of their students'

performance. This valuable information helps faculty members examine areas of weakness and plan for improved instruction during the next school year. In summation, all Piedmont High School teachers are actively involved in academic assessment decisions designed to improve individual performance and instructional effectiveness. Everyone teaches; everyone learns.

It is vital that students' academic achievement is communicated to parents, students, and the community. This communication at Piedmont High School is accomplished using a variety of means. Individual students themselves conduct one of the most effective forms of communication; students are familiar with their results and those results are communicated on a regular basis with parents. This communication is accomplished digitally through the learning management system (LMS), goal setting meetings, and traditional paper reports. Parents can access daily, weekly, and quarterly updates for all classes through the parent portal in the school's LMS. Additionally, traditional progress reports are printed and sent to parents every four and a half weeks. Goal-setting meetings for those students who have not passed the AHSGE allow parents, students, school officials, and mentors to establish goals and plans to help the student be successful.

Each school year the superintendent and principal present a "State of the School" address to parents, faculty, and city leaders in a community meeting. This address contains all academic results for the school for the prior school year. Additionally, the address is presented to the School Board and City Council. Assessment results are also communicated through the local newspaper and school district newsletters. Student achievement is celebrated throughout the school year with student of the month awards and school-wide recognition programs. These ceremonies conclude with "Academic Honors Night" at the end of the school year where students are recognized for high academic achievement. Last school year, over 70% of the student body was honored.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

In 2009, Piedmont High School was chosen to serve as the district pilot site for the transformation of traditional classrooms into true digital learning environments. This innovative course necessitated the purchase and installation of 21st Century classroom technologies i.e., projection and audio systems, student response pads, and document cameras. Every high school teacher received a laptop computer for home and school use. Additionally, the installation of four mobile laptop carts reduced the student/computer ratio to a mere 3:1.

The pilot project was an overwhelming success. Previously disengaged students were awakened by the new digital learning environment. Students began participating more actively in class and assumed greater responsibility for their individual learning. Special education students exhibited remarkable success in this liberating, equalizing environment.

Following the first year of the high school pilot project, our district technology team made the decision to propagate this model in both the middle and elementary schools. Our unique program, *MPower Piedmont*, matured into a true 1:1 laptop initiative. High school administrators and teachers have begun serving as mentors for middle and elementary school faculty and staff. By sharing successful strategies across the district, this initiative has taken on a life of its own.

School district leaders, both in and out-of-state, are interested in best practices for the seamless implementation of a successful 1:1 initiative. Piedmont High School serves as the host school for all site visits. High school leaders, teachers, and students plan classroom tours, lead discussion groups, and serve as guides for visiting guests. Site visits provide a forum for teachers and leaders from other schools to interact with PHS students and teachers to learn the *secret* of our success. Interestingly, it seems we learn as much from these experiences as our guests. Sometimes this simple act of verbalization helps our leadership team identify areas in need of improvement and/or modification.

The first site visit was conducted in April 2010, only seven months after the initial 1:1 rollout day. Two school districts sent approximately twenty-five ambassadors to the first site visit. Over one hundred thirty-five guests from forty school districts and five state agencies attended the two-day site visit in May 2010. District administrators have presented the *MPower Piedmont* initiative at state and national conferences. Additionally, presentations have been given for audiences at the Alabama Best Practices Center and the School Superintendents of Alabama Association.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Teachers and administrators have discovered through trial and error that effective, ongoing communication is the key factor to engaging families and members of the community in the educational process. As classrooms at Piedmont High School have transitioned from traditional to digital learning environments, school-to-home communications have also changed. Through the medium of social media sites such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* - students, parents, and community members can access school information at anytime via the Internet. Automated calling (using the program *SchoolCast*) enhances school-to-home communication by allowing the administration to send a prerecorded message to parents' and guardians' telephones and cell phones within minutes. Other forms of communication include the school website, monthly newsletter, email, letters to parents, and parent/teacher conferences.

One PHS activity that has truly become a favorite of parents is portfolio night. Its utilization of a platform designed to showcase many of our students' creative, multimedia projects affords an informal opportunity for face-to-face collaboration among parents, students, and teachers.

Recently, members of our community have received instruction in basic computer and Internet classes offered by PHS. Chinese, German, Latin, and Spanish are available and provided free of charge for parents and local citizens interested in learning a second or third language.

Piedmont High School utilizes the *ANGEL* learning management system. This product of *Blackboard* is used in many colleges and universities. Using this system, parents are able to create an account (parent portal) that allows them to access their child's grades and assignments throughout the school year. Through this portal, parents can monitor homework, assessment results, and the overall academic progress of their children.

As educators, we are entrusted with the most valuable possession families and community members have to offer - their child. Therefore, it is crucial to engage all stakeholders in ongoing, meaningful communication on matters affecting their children/our students. At Piedmont High School, parents and community members are extended an open invitation to visit our campus and enjoy extracurricular activities of all types. Piedmont High School is simply an extension of the home; more importantly, the home is a valuable extension of PHS.

1. Curriculum:

Piedmont High School is devoted to achieving excellence in all facets of student life. The Alabama Course of Study drives the curriculum. Curriculum guides are developed while considering rigor, pacing, state assessments, instructional resources, and career or college preparedness goals. Faculty members are devoted to preparing students for subject-area benchmark assessments, *Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE)*, *AP Exams*, and the *ACT*. Disaggregated data from these assessments assist teachers in designing a challenging and beneficial curriculum for our students.

The faculty focuses on creating engaging lessons using a blended model of instruction. We have committed to our district vision of “empowering students to fulfill their dreams” using a one-to-one technology initiative that delivers individualized, on-level instruction for every student of Piedmont High School.

Math courses include Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Algebraic Connections. Standard diploma students must pass all four courses. Advanced courses are Advanced Algebra II, Honors Algebra II with Trigonometry, Honors Geometry, and Pre-Calculus. Students may take Algebra I in the eighth grade and Geometry in the ninth grade. In 2013-2014, the math department will offer AP Calculus for those students who complete Algebra I in the eighth grade.

English students are offered standard and honors level courses in every grade. Ninth- grade English focuses on world literature and grammar. Tenth-grade English focuses on Early American Literature and grammar, in preparation for the *AHSGE*. While strengthening composition and grammar skills in the eleventh and twelfth grades, students also study American Literature and British Literature. All English students are required to complete a technology-infused project. Enrichment courses are offered in Digital Media and Yearbook. AP Language and Composition is offered to advanced students.

The history department offers regular and honors level courses in World History, U.S. History, Government, and Economics. Students take World History as freshmen, U.S. History as sophomores and juniors (with AP U.S. History an option), and Economics and U.S. Government (with AP U.S. Government and Politics an option) in the twelfth grade. World Geography and psychology (online) are considered electives and can be taken at any grade level.

Foreign language courses are delivered via distance learning and include Chinese, French, German, Latin, and Spanish. Students pursuing an advanced or honor diploma must complete two years of foreign language. Another elective is Programming Methodology offered through Stanford University via iTunes. Students at PHS are also offered courses in agricultural science, metal fabrication, construction, and framing.

The science department of PHS strives to prepare students for productive and responsible participation in the global society into which they will live. The science department offers courses in physical science, chemistry, biology, ecology, physics, and anatomy. Students must complete biology, a physical science, and two other science courses to earn a diploma. Advanced students are offered Honors Biology, Honors Physical Science, Chemistry, Human Anatomy, and Physics. Advanced students are required to take five science courses. Teachers participate in the *Alabama Science in Motion* program, the goal of which is to provide high-tech laboratory experiences for students and effective professional development for teachers.

Many programs enhance our core curriculum and foster excellence in PHS students. The fine arts program consists of art, marching band, concert band, and instrumental music. Our band is award winning

and receives superior ratings in all competitions. PHS also has a successful physical education/health program that is an essential part of our students' well-being. Health courses are delivered entirely online and provide students with an online experience before they attend college. Students may also enroll in Advanced PE/Weight Training; most students complete a four-year individualized training program in physical education.

2. Reading/English:

The 2007 *Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts* provides the framework for the K-12 study of English language arts in Alabama's schools. Piedmont High School English teachers strive to equip students with skills to meet the challenges of living in a diverse society. The English curriculum is designed to build on previously acquired skills, while exploring the facets of literature and the written language.

The mission of the English department is to prepare students to be able to read, interpret, and comprehend a variety of texts, effectively communicate through writing and speaking, manage and apply information, use critical thinking to gather new information, and answer critical-thinking questions posed to them. English teachers blend traditional instructional techniques with technology-infused methods to better reach all types of learners. Among the instructional methods employed are modeling, challenge-based learning, project-based learning, whole and small group instruction, research/inquiry projects, and webquests.

The English department recently completed the development of benchmark assessments designed to help pinpoint deficits in students' skills. Teachers analyze benchmark results, as well as results from the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE)* to help develop a prescriptive program for every student. Students identified as low achieving are offered individualized, pre-AHSGE skills review activities administered through the ninth and tenth-grade English classes. Students who do not complete the *AHSGE* successfully in the eleventh grade are offered intense, individualized remediation using technology such as *Plato* and *USATestPrep* software. Struggling readers receive help via a research-based, prescriptive reading program titled *Corrective Reading*. This program remediates struggling readers on the skills needed to master decoding and comprehension of reading material. A scripted approach is used at a brisk pace, with carefully chosen exercises and other presentation techniques, designed to engage reluctant learners. Special education students are taught through inclusion classes with the help of a special education teacher. Laptops and iPads are used to enable our special education population improve their language skills through high interest, interactive exercises.

The PHS English department strives to meet the needs of all students. Advanced students are offered courses designed to challenge and stimulate the college-bound student. Advanced courses are offered to ninth through eleventh-grade students, while AP Language and Composition are offered to twelfth-grade advanced students.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics department of Piedmont High School follows the standards outlined in the 2010 *Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics* with the goal of ensuring students develop as problem solvers, decision makers, and lifelong learners. Course offerings include Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Algebraic Connections. The Algebraic Connections class focuses on the application of mathematics in everyday life. Advanced courses include Advanced Algebra II, Honors Algebra II with Trigonometry, Honors Geometry, and Pre-Calculus.

To ensure students are successful on the *AHSGE*, all students are required to take Algebra I in the eighth grade. Multiple factors, including grades and teacher recommendation, determine whether students take Algebra II with Trigonometry or Algebra I in the ninth grade. Algebra II is a continuation of Algebra I

skills with an added intense study of trigonometry. In 2013, the math department will offer AP Calculus for students meeting the prerequisites for participation.

Beyond advanced course offerings, math students have the opportunity to complete dual enrollment classes with Gadsden State Community College. They are also offered *ACT Prep* courses online, and are given the opportunity to participate in the Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honors Society. Math teachers offer tutoring to students every morning and afternoon. This is especially beneficial for low-performing students. Teachers analyze benchmark tests to determine student need and design individualized learning plans -implemented through an online learning management system or software program. Students who have been identified as low performing on the *AHSGE* are offered separate remediation courses designed to improve skills in target areas based on past assessment performance. To prevent low-performing students from falling further behind, students are offered credit recovery courses through a customizable research-based online program (*Plato*).

The math faculty integrates state-of-the-art technology on a daily basis. All classrooms are equipped with a document camera, projection system, wireless slate, laptop computer, classroom response system, and integrated sound. Using modern technology, math teachers follow an eclectic model of teaching that offers direct instruction, small group/peer-to-peer instruction, modeling, inquiry/challenge based learning, and online experiences.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The science department of Piedmont High School follows the standards outlined in the 2007 *Alabama Course of Study: Science, Scientific Literacy*. The PHS science department is dedicated to providing current, relevant instruction on a daily basis. The goal is to prepare students for productive, responsible participation in a complex society. The faculty and staff constantly strive to help students develop a better understanding of various living organisms and their relationships to each other. Human impact (both positive and negative) is interwoven throughout the life-science curriculum.

PHS Students are consistently challenged to think more critically about scientific data. They are frequently asked to explore the implications of science on society through inquiry-based instruction. Through the effective use of technology, teachers are able to enhance the curriculum by remaining in sync with modern educational practices. Targeted use of the Internet provides boundless resources of information regarding ongoing discoveries in the scientific community. PHS teachers regularly employ a variety of instructional strategies and techniques. Recently, teachers have begun designing units centered on the challenge-based learning model. This method allows students to assume increased ownership of the educational process, as well as the solution/end product. This strategy allows students to identify real world “challenges” and develop and subsequently publish solutions to the challenges. Results are proving to be quite enlightening to both students and staff.

The science department at PHS takes pride in its success as measured by various accountability reports. Students consistently perform well on the *AHSGE*. Ninety-nine percent of the 2012 graduating class has passed the science portion, with thirty-nine percent scoring level IV achievement status (advanced). Additionally, students have consistently scored at or above state and national averages on the *ACT* in the science subsection for the past four years. These assessments help provide measurable validation as to the instructional effectiveness of the science department at Piedmont High School.

5. Instructional Methods:

The faculty of Piedmont High School believes one the most important keys to a successful learning environment is total student engagement. To this end, Piedmont City Schools began an initiative in 2009 appropriately titled *MPower Piedmont*. The mission of this initiative is to empower students to fulfill their dreams through the appropriate use of technology. PHS has implemented a 21st Century learning

environment that promotes the possibility for true engagement anytime/anyplace. Forged by intense professional development and visionary leadership, the role of teacher at PHS has metamorphosed from provider of knowledge to facilitator of learning. Faculty members constantly strive to serve as models that use technology as a tool for inquiry, research, and presentation of information.

All faculty members use a blended approach to teaching. This approach combines face-to-face instructional methods with computer-mediated activities designed to form a more integrated instructional approach. Teachers use a variety of techniques to include the following: modeling, challenge-based learning, project-based learning, whole and small group instruction, research/inquiry projects, and webquests. Research has shown this eclectic method is very effective with our current generation of media-driven students.

All PHS classrooms have 21st Century technology tools to aid teachers in providing a stimulating learning environment. Audio-visual presentation equipment, classroom audio amplification systems, wireless slates, student response systems, and wireless Internet access (coupled with a MacBook laptop for every student) provide teachers with the tools needed to assure every student achieves success. Software/software support such as the *ANGEL* learning management system, *Classworks*, *Scantron*, *IXL Math*, and *Plato* assist teachers in developing individualized learning plans for every student at PHS.

To ensure high levels of student learning, teachers incorporate the use of the following: *Corrective Reading*, credit recovery opportunities, individual remediation plans, prescriptive technology packages, and the *Science in Motion* supplemental science program. Informal and formal data are gathered from sources such as content area benchmark testing and data analysis from formal assessments such as the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam*, *ACT*, and *AP* exams.

Through research-based instructional methods, a commitment to excellence in teaching, an unwavering commitment to students, and leadership devoted to empowering students through the use of technology, PHS is providing students with the skills needed to become productive members of our global society.

6. Professional Development:

The administration and faculty of Piedmont High School are committed to transforming teaching and learning by continuously modeling best teaching practices. In 2009, a new approach to professional development was implemented. The professional development emphasis became more collaborative, continuous, and founded in research-based methods.

Teachers are afforded many professional development offerings in areas such as challenge-based learning, project-based learning, and blended learning using an online learning management system. Professional development opportunities are based on a teacher-centered model using a combination of face-to-face workshops, mentoring opportunities, and online learning experiences. Partnership development is a vital part of our professional development program. Through partnerships with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Jacksonville State University (JSU) College of Education, JSU Teacher In-Service Center, JSU Technology in Motion, Apple, and other school districts, Piedmont High School receives the necessary support to provide high quality, meaningful training for our faculty and support staff.

According to research, the teacher's role must transform from supplier of information to facilitator of learning. Teachers at PHS are trained to use technology as a tool for inquiry, discovery, research, and presentation of information for positive student outcomes. Some desired outcomes include the following: decreased dropout rate, fewer classes skipped, lower rates of absenteeism, and greater academic gains in math, science, history, and reading.

Teachers participate in professional development activities designed to promote a greater emphasis on informal assessment strategies. Ultimately, the purpose of formative assessment is to increase student achievement and assist teachers as they meet the needs of a diverse population. Early detection of student misconceptions provides the best opportunity for effective remediation.

Annually, each teacher completes a professional development plan with input from his or her building administrator. This plan includes personal and professional goals agreed upon by both parties. Teachers are encouraged and provided financial support to participate in various professional conferences such as the Alabama Educational Technology Conference, the Mooresville Graded School District Summer Institute in North Carolina (teaching in a 1:1 laptop environment), and the Alabama Transition Conference (Special Education teachers).

7. School Leadership:

Steven Jobs once said, “Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.” The leadership team for Piedmont City Schools truly personifies innovation. Piedmont was a shrinking rural community whose economic lifeline consisted of textile-based jobs that were quickly disappearing. The leadership team for PCS realized the imperative need for our students and community to become more technologically literate. The Piedmont High School administration and faculty fully committed to this ideal, and the goal of *empowering students to fulfil their dreams* was born.

The principal and assistant principal worked very closely with the digital curriculum coordinator, the technology coordinator, and the superintendent to see this dream become a reality known as *MPower Piedmont*. The leadership team continues to meet regularly to plan for the implementation of many new ideas necessary for continual improvement. Beneficial student services such as *Corrective Reading*, credit-recovery, and online courses are some recent products of the team’s ongoing collaboration.

As stated earlier, the administration at PHS consists of one principal and one assistant principal. Both administrators know the students on a personal level. They strive to instill a sense of pride and shared vision within every student. Both focus their efforts on being an instructional leader for the school. Both spend countless hours researching best practice models, sharing information with their faculty, and providing impromptu face-to-face professional development. The administration of PHS believes that a genuine partnership with the faculty produces a visionary leadership team that is wholly dedicated to the school’s mission. This team approach has paved the way for PHS to be recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* as one of America’s Top High Schools in 2008, 2009, and 2010. The administration at PHS continues to diligently implement programs that benefit all learners. Professional development opportunities for faculty are ongoing, timely, and dedicated to achieving student success in a 21st Century learning environment.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 11 Test: Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/1999 Publisher: Alabama Department of Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	97	90	92	88	90
Exceeds	37	17	14	26	32
Number of students tested	82	64	67	61	70
Percent of total students tested	100	100	97	98	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	3	2	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	97	86	90	79	88
Exceeds	28	5	10	11	15
Number of students tested	39	40	36	28	38
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	93	83			75
Exceeds	27	8			25
Number of students tested	16	11	7	8	11
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 11 Test: Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/1999 Publisher: Alabama Department of Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	96	81	85	85	89
Exceeds	25	19	16	23	23
Number of students tested	82	64	67	61	70
Percent of total students tested	100	100	97	98	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	3	2	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	94	74	78	75	83
Exceeds	19	9	13	18	15
Number of students tested	39	40	36	28	38
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	93	50			76
Exceeds	20	8			8
Number of students tested	16	11	7	8	11
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 12 Test: Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/1999 Publisher: Alabama Department of Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	99	100	97	96	100
Exceeds	21	14	26	33	30
Number of students tested	64	67	61	70	73
Percent of total students tested	99	96	97	97	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	1	2	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	3	2	3	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	98	100	92	95	100
Exceeds	10	9	0	13	31
Number of students tested	40	36	28	38	29
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	92			79	
Exceeds	17			21	
Number of students tested	11	7	8	11	8
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 12 Test: Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/1999 Publisher: Alabama Department of Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	99	100	95	96	99
Exceeds	19	14	23	25	25
Number of students tested	64	67	61	70	73
Percent of total students tested	99	96	97	97	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	1	2	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	3	2	3	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	98	100	92	95	97
Exceeds	10	12	17	15	14
Number of students tested	40	36	28	38	29
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	92			79	
Exceeds	8			7	
Number of students tested	11	7	8	11	8
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	97	95	94	92	95
Exceeds	29	15	19	29	30
Number of students tested	146	131	128	131	143
Percent of total students tested	99	98	97	97	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	3	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	2	2	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	97	92	90	88	93
Exceeds	18	6	5	12	21
Number of students tested	79	76	64	66	67
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	92	50	0	45	43
Exceeds	22	4	0	12	14
Number of students tested	27	18	15	19	19
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	97	90	89	90	94
Exceeds	22	16	19	24	24
Number of students tested	146	131	128	131	143
Percent of total students tested	99	98	97	97	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	3	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	2	2	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	96	86	84	86	89
Exceeds	14	10	14	16	14
Number of students tested	79	76	64	66	67
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	92	30	0	45	44
Exceeds	15	4	0	4	4
Number of students tested	27	18	15	19	19
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL3